

	<h1 style="text-align: center; color: blue;">City of Helena</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center; color: blue;">Personnel Policy</h2>	Policy number	7-2
		Original Adoption	09-26-06
		Revision #	2
		Last revision date	October 2015
Section Title	Employee Development		
Subject	Tuition Reimbursement Program		

The City of Helena recognizes that employee education and employee development are integral components of work performance and are inherently tied to the city's mission, goals, strategic planning, workforce planning and the provision of services to the public. Tuition reimbursement may be granted for courses that are work-related, that maintain or improve the skills required by employees in their employment, that may be necessary for the anticipated needs of the City, or that may make employees more valuable to the organization. No tuition reimbursement will be granted to repeat a class. Courses must be taken at an accredited college, a university, an approved trade school, an accredited "on-line" university or an approved technical school. When questions arise concerning whether or not a course qualifies under the plan, they will be decided by the City Manager in consultation with the employee's Department Head and the Human Resources Director.

Courses do not qualify as work-related if they are, 1) needed to meet the minimum requirements of the employee's current job; 2) will lead to qualifying the employee for a new trade or business; or 3) are to fulfill general aspirations for personal reasons by the employee.

This policy is not a guarantee that funding will be available. Funding availability depends on training budgets within each department. Departments are not required to allocate funding for the tuition reimbursement program. Available funds will be distributed on a non-discriminatory basis.

Before enrolling in a course, an employee must apply for education reimbursement (form available in the Human Resources Office) and have it approved by his/her supervisor, Department Head and the Human Resources Director. Final approval will be determined by the City Manager.

The maximum amount of reimbursement per fiscal year is based on an employee's years of service. Employees must have successfully completed their one-year probation period before they are eligible for this benefit.

- The maximum annual reimbursement amount for undergraduate courses is **\$750** during the second through fourth years of service and **\$1,500** during the fifth year and each year thereafter.
- The maximum annual reimbursement amount for graduate courses is **\$1,000** during the second through fourth years of service and **\$2,000** during the fifth year and thereafter. Reimbursement for Graduate classes shall be subject to Internal Revenue Service rules governing educational assistance programs (Section 127). Specifically, reimbursement received for graduate credit is not exempt from the income exclusion under Section 127, and must be reported to the IRS as income for the employee.

Reimbursable expenses include tuition, certain administrative fees, laboratory and technical fees, and required textbooks (up to \$100 per course). Incidental fees, such as parking permits, supplies, and recreation fees/activity fees are not covered under this program.

Reimbursement will be made upon successful completion of the course (a grade of "C" or better or a "pass" for a pass/fail course). In order to receive payment, the employee must provide a copy of the official grade report and all relevant receipts to the Human Resources Office. To obtain reimbursement, the employees must still be employed by the City of Helena at the time reimbursement is paid.

Because this benefit is offered to employees to maintain or improve their required skills and to encourage their further development while increasing their contribution to the City, any employee who voluntarily leaves employment with the City within twenty-four (24) months of receiving any tuition reimbursement will be required to repay tuition paid on his/her behalf to be set at the rate of 1/24 of the total amount for

each month (or major portion thereof) the termination or discharge date falls short of fulfilling the twenty-four month requirement. Any deficiency owed under this program becomes immediately due and payable at the time of termination or discharge. By accepting tuition reimbursement, the employee grants the City the right to deduct any deficiency from any monies due and owing the employee including, but not limited to paychecks, expense checks or payout of accrued leave time.